# Call 311:

**Linking 311/CRM Data to Performance Measurement and Budgeting**
*Case Study*

## Durham One Call

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**ICMA**

*Leaders at the Core of Better Communities*

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## Community and System Profile

### Durham, North Carolina
### Durham One Call

**Form of Government**
Council-manager

**Council Members**
7 members including the mayor, 3 ward-elected members, and 3 at-large elected members

**Population**
217,847 (2007)

**City's Annual Budget**
$338,252,160 (FY 2008-09)

**Durham One Call System Budget**
$661,271 (FY 2008-09)

**Major Components**
- Physical Location: Durham City Hall
- Square Footage: 1,400 square feet
- Number of Phones: 13
- Number of Computers: 13

**Number of Staff**
13 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, including 10 agents, 1 lobby representative, 1 supervisor, and 1 manager

**Location within City Government**
City Manager's Office, supervised by the Assistant to the City Manager

**Type of System**
Customer service request and information center with a dedicated seven-digit phone number, voicemail, online interface, and walk-up customer service counter in City Hall.

**Unique System Features and Management Tools**
- Cisco 7940 phone with automatic call distribution
- FeatureTel VOIP Web portal for call statistical reporting
- City Works, version 4.2, which allows users to log calls and create service requests
- Crystal Reports, version 9, a software application designed to create specialized reports
- Jabra GN9120 wireless headsets
- MUNIS, an enterprise resources planning (ERP) software application

**Citizen Feedback Mechanisms**
- Results-Based Accountability
- Citizen Satisfaction Survey
- Coffee with Council
- Inter-Neighborhood Council
- Partners Against Crime
- Neighborhood Pride Alliance
- ComNet

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**RESULTS NETWORKS**

ICMA is the premier local government leadership and management organization. Its mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and advocating professional management of local government worldwide. ICMA provides member support; publications, data, and information; peer and results-oriented assistance; and training and professional development to more than 8,200 city, town, and county experts and other individuals throughout the world.

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**Making the Connections: Community Engagement, Performance Measurement and Budgeting**

Local governments exist to serve the needs and wants of their citizens, but determining how best to serve those needs and wants involves integrating complex and challenging processes including community engagement, performance measurement, and budgeting. Centralized customer service systems enable the collection of data that supports all three processes. Also known as constituent relationship management (CRM) systems, data from these systems can:

- Support **community engagement** by giving citizens multiple, easy means for contacting their local government and providing qualitative and quantitative measures of what services citizens are requesting.
- Support **performance measurement** by monitoring and tracking executive dashboard metrics, service level agreements, time-to-complete metrics, geographic location of service requests, and constituent satisfaction, among others.
- Support **budgeting** by providing the means to analyze where, when, and how departments are delivering services and enabling them to improve their operations.

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## Brief History of Durham One Call

Community leaders established Durham One Call, a centralized customer service system, in 2004. Local leadership, including the then-city manager and a group of city and county elected officials, spearheaded the implementation of the centralized system as a means of being more responsive to their constituents. At the time, both the city of Durham and Durham County had a high number of calls being transferred among departments which resulted in many lost calls. Accountability was a particular concern, and the leaders felt that the tracking capability associated with a centralized call system would greatly enhance the overall accountability of local government programs and service. While originally envisioned as a joint city-county venture, funding obstacles arose for Durham County, which forced its withdrawal.

The mission of Durham One Call is to "be responsive to the needs and desires of its citizens, businesses and visitors to Durham. Durham One Call will be exemplary in its operation, management and professionalism."[1] The city of Durham also has a number of other efforts underway that influence the overall effectiveness of Durham One Call. For instance, the city has adopted a *Customer Service Bill of Rights* that clearly communicates the local government's commitment "to provide excellent service at all times by determining the needs of our citizens and customers and satisfying those needs beyond their expectations."[2]

The city of Durham has an established reputation for its proactive efforts, most notably through the city's Results-Based Accountability (RBA) Initiative or Imagine Durham, to engage citizens in determining what programs and services they most need and want.

The existence of an overarching community engagement and performance measurement effort, such as the RBA Initiative, greatly increases the usefulness of data generated by the Durham One Call system

The ultimate success of a centralized call system requires the support and active participation of the local government departments responsible for fulfilling the service requests received from the public. The city of Durham has thoroughly examined many of the "back-end" processes in managing in a centralized customer service system; its willingness to share its findings as part of this case study creates a valuable teaching aid for other communities working through similar issues.

## System Costs

In 2002, the city of Durham issued a request for proposals (RFP) for the provision of CRM software. Three companies responded to the request. This process resulted in the selection of Azteca, which provided an integrated software package to the city at a price of $125,000.

Initial labor costs were $450,000, which funded salaries and benefits for twelve Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions to staff the call center. Ten customer service representative positions were reallocated from several city of Durham departments, including Customer Billing Services, Solid Waste Management, Public Works, and the 911 call center. Additionally, two management positions were created.

The city manager's office also worked with the Public Affairs Office to develop a communication plan for the promotion of Durham One Call through advertisements placed in city water billing statements,

### Table 1.  Durham One Call Start-up Costs

**Durham One Call Implementation and Operating Budget, FY 2004–05**

| | |
|---|---|
| Labor | $450,000 |
| Integrated Software | $125,000 |
| Annual Maintenance | $36,000 |
| Workstations | $20,000 |
| Dedicated Server | $6,000 |
| Marketing | $5,000 |
| **Total** | **$642,000** |

television public service announcements, and city and Durham Chamber of Commerce Web sites. The cost of marketing in the initial year was approximately $5,000.

In the first year of implementation, start-up costs (including year one operational costs) were approximately $642,000, including capital purchases of integrated software, a dedicated server, and workstations. The initial operating costs ran approximately $491,000 for salaries/benefits, annual maintenance, and marketing. (See Table 1 for a summary of start-up costs for Durham One Call.)

Durham One Call's labor and benefits expenses in FY 2008-09 were $661,271, which covers thirteen FTEs, $20,000 for an annual maintenance agreement for City Works software, which generates service requests, and $2,000 annually for software support for Cintech Technologies, which is used for call statistical reporting. The center is open from 7:00 a.m. ET to 6:00 p.m. weekdays and uses an answering service for calls after hours and on the weekends.

## Durham "As Is" Scenario

The city of Durham wants to hear from its constituents and makes it easy for individuals to get involved. It deploys an impressive number of community engagement efforts as detailed in Table 2. The wide variety and different types of community engagement efforts give citizens a range of ways to become involved and have a say in the services the city provides. The complement of Durham's community engagement efforts allows for minimal involvement, such as making a simple phone call to report a problem, to very high-end involvement suitable for neighbor activists.

Some of these efforts provide primarily qualitative feedback to the city, for example, the Inter-

Neighborhood Council and Neighborhood Pride Alliance, and other efforts provide more quantitative information such as the Citizen Satisfaction Survey. This balance between qualitative and quantitative information provides city leaders with a virtually complete picture of what services and programs are most important to the citizens of Durham.

At the center of these efforts is Durham's Result-Based Accountability Initiative. Through the RBA Initiative, the city and Durham County have developed a set of nine priority outcomes to improve quality of life in the larger community. Durham first published a community progress report for the RBA Initiative with a grant from the National Center for Civic Innovation (NCCI), a nonprofit organization that funds projects promoting good government practices.

Durham's RBA Initiative fosters good communication between the local government and its constituents. It also ensures that local government is on the right track to achieving the desired public outcomes. Citizens are engaged in developing a vision for the future of the community and they are routinely informed about the progress made toward achieving those goals. The city and county make a point of linking each of their programs and services to a specific desired outcome. For example, one of the desired outcomes for the Durham community is that "Everyone enjoys sustainable, thriving neighborhoods with an efficient and well maintained infrastructure."[3] To measure this goal, one of the performance measurements is the number of paved streets maintained by the city. Another performance measurement used is the number of organized active neighborhood associations.

In FY 2008, Durham One Call answered 214,286 calls and the lobby representative assisted 10,486 visitors to City Hall. The center also processed 24,394 requests for city services. A customer service follow-up survey indicated that 95 percent of respondents were satisfied with the service received. The volume of contacts and overall citizen satisfaction rating indicate that the public values Durham One Call and relies heavily on it as a means for connecting with local government.

While Durham routinely reports the results of the RBA Initiative to the community, data from Durham One Call historically has not been widely reported to the public. The new manager for Durham One Call has begun to attend neighborhood and community group meetings, which gives the program greater visibility and over time will make it a trusted source of information on the services being provided by the city.

A good number of Durham's community engagement efforts also contain performance measurement elements. Links between community engagement and performance measurement are important because they foster greater public confidence in local government. In linking community engagement efforts to those in performance measurement, the city sends an important message, namely "This is what you've told us you want, and this is what we have done to meet your request for those services." In an era of increasingly tight and shrinking local government revenues, citizens want to know where their tax dollars are going and what services they are receiving for those dollars.

Durham's practice of reporting to the public through the RBA Initiative demonstrates the city's commitment to accountability and transparency of operations.

Currently the city uses Durham One Call data reports primarily for tracking and monitoring purposes. Department managers report that they review the number of unresolved service requests on a weekly basis. This practice is a critical part of performance measurement and indicates the departments' responsiveness to requests for service. The Solid Waste Department also uses Durham One Call data for daily management purposes. As Durham One Call service requests come in, they are folded into the department's routine workflow. If staff members notice a greater number of requests coming in for a particular neighborhood, a manager will check in with the crew on the associated route to determine if there are problems and provide assistance as needed.

Durham One Call has the capability to generate new data reports that could further assist partner departments, as well the city government as a whole, with other management challenges, though at present, there is little demand. The city has a strong GIS program, but currently, Durham One Call data are not used with the program on a regular basis to produce reports on a neighborhood activity within the community.

In terms of budgeting efforts, the city has fewer links back to its strong community engagement and performance measurement efforts. Durham is in the process of upgrading its enterprise resources planning (ERP) software application. It intends to actively identify and pursue linkages between the data captured in the financial modules and the back-end performance reporting systems. Durham's "Coffee with Council" meetings give the public an opportunity to meet with members of the city council as they begin to compile the next year's budget. Likewise, council members review results from the Citizen Satisfaction Survey and consider those in the development of the city's budget. Consideration of Durham One Call data is not incorporated into the city's budget process in a formal sense, though individual departments indicated they use some of the data in preparing their budget requests.

Figure 1 graphically represents how the city's current efforts appear to be working within the local government. The city's links between its community engagement and performance measurement efforts are particularly noteworthy. Links between the city's budgeting processes and its community engagement and performance measurement efforts seem less tightly connected. The city has excellent means for gathering and reviewing important qualitative data from its citizens. The use of quantitative data, primarily data available through Durham One Call, is not as strong.

## Durham "To Be" Scenario

The driver and focal point of the city's efforts to integrate community engagement, performance measurement, and budgeting processes reside with the RBA Initiative, which establishes the community's desired

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### Table 2.  Durham Efforts in Three Areas

| Community Engagement | Performance Measurement | Budgeting |
|---|---|---|
| Results-Based Accountability (RBA)/Imagine Durham | RBA/Imagine Durham | Coffee with Council |
| Durham One Call | Durham One Call | Citizen Satisfaction Survey |
| Citizen Satisfaction Survey | Citizen Satisfaction Survey | |
| ComNet | | |
| Coffee with Council | | |
| Inter-Neighborhood Council | | |
| Partners Against Crime (PAC) | | |
| Neighborhood Pride Alliance | | |

**Figure 1.   Durham "As Is"**

Community Engagement

Performance Measurement

Budgeting

**Figure 2.   Durham "To Be"**
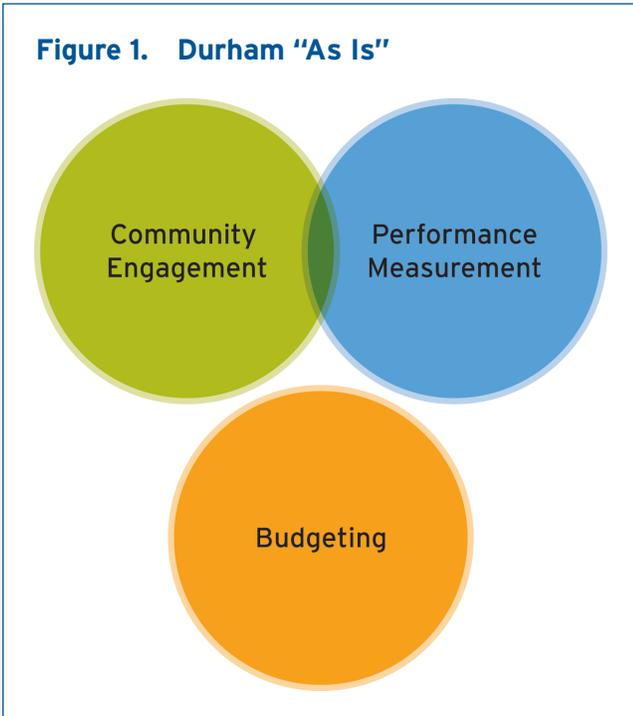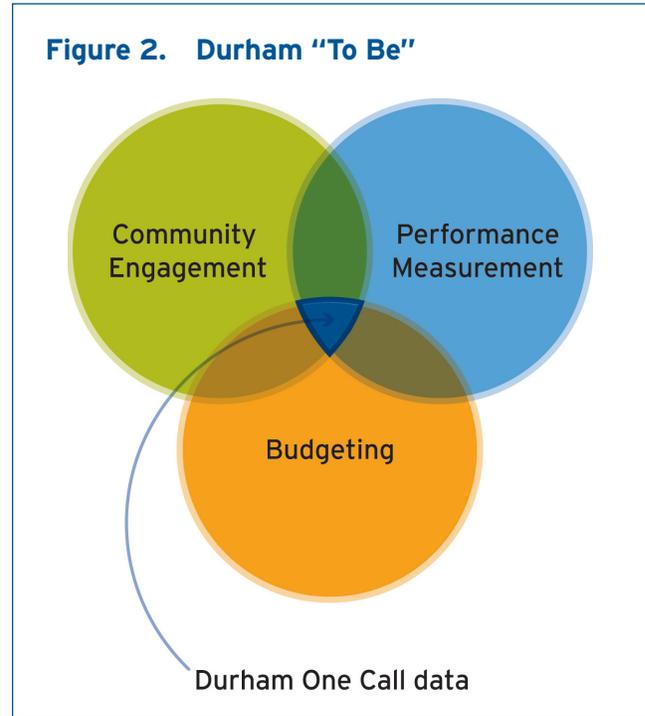
Community Engagement

Performance Measurement

Budgeting

Durham One Call data

goals and outcomes (see Figure 3) and examines progress toward achieving the outcomes through carefully defined performance measurements. Supplementing the work of the RBA Initiative, Durham One Call can and should add considerable value by providing quantitative data to help city leaders better understand demand for local government services and programs.

Comprehensive Durham One Call data reports, which summarize the volume and type of information and service requests being received by all departments, would provide city leaders with documentation of frequently requested services throughout the city. Combined with the city's other community engagement efforts, including requests from PACs, the Inter-Neighborhood Council, and other community groups, city leaders can be confident that they have a broad view of the constituent needs and wants.
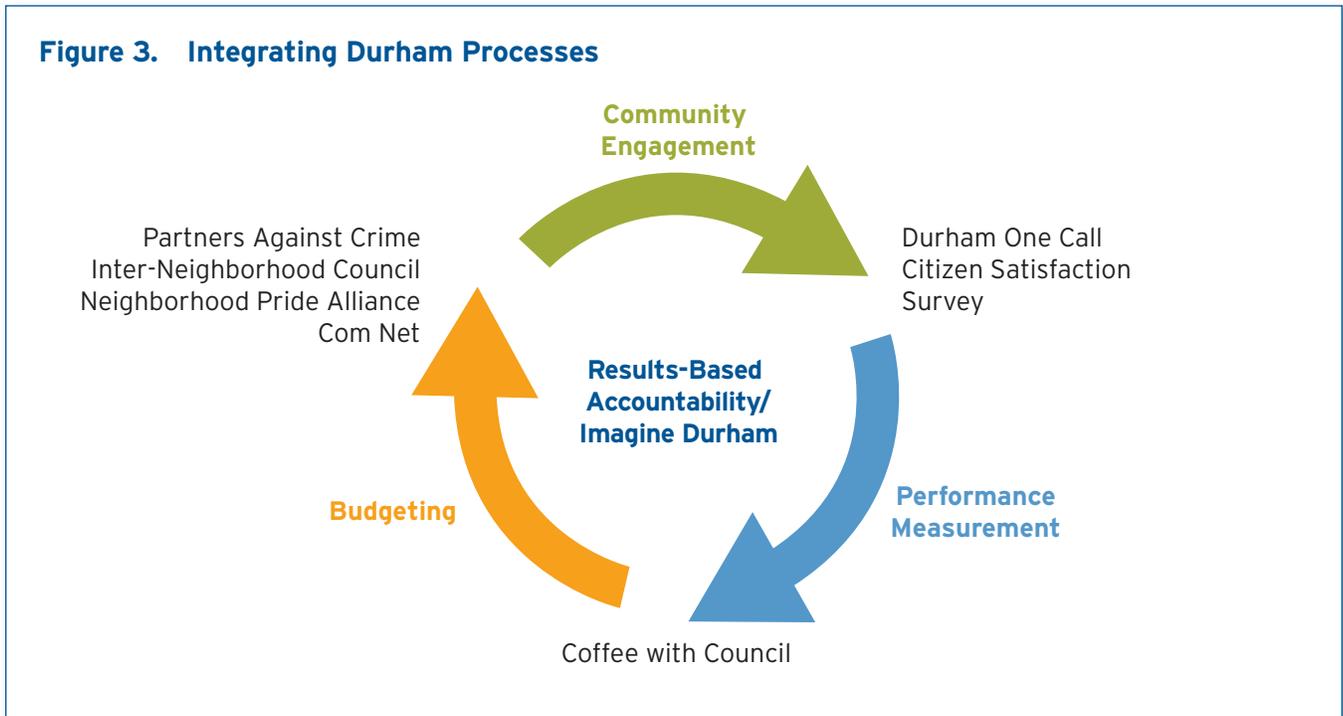
Performance measurement involves much more than just Durham One Call data, but these data can be very helpful to partner departments in better managing daily operations. Mapping out where and what type of requests are being received can alert managers to the need for outreach and education in a particular neighborhood, reallocation of departmental resources or staff assignments based on demand, or perhaps outsource particular functions. Tracking and monitoring fulfillment rates by partner departments are also important uses of Durham One Call data.

Durham One Call data has a use for budgeting purposes. Combining this information with service requests from Durham One Call with data collected through the city's new ERP software application will enable city leaders to better understand the costs associated with fulfilling services requests. Incorporating real-time financial data into Durham's comprehensive performance management program will enhance its effectiveness and most likely help indentify more cost-efficient approaches to delivering programs to Durham citizens.

On a related front, reviewing service requests during inter-departmental meetings can aid managers in strategic thinking and problem-solving. One of the biggest advantages of having a centralized customer service system is the opportunity to document and review local government business processes and procedures. Documenting all the business processes gives the local government an opportunity to do a thorough review of the linkages among processes and look for existing bottlenecks in workflow as well as the possibility of achieving new efficiencies and cost savings.

## Study Methodology

The authors conducted group interviews with departmental teams throughout Durham city government as well as members of the public in December 2008. Four separate interview protocols, each designed with a

**Figure 3.   Integrating Durham Processes**



specific audience in mind, guided the questioning. The authors used a conversational interviewing technique to more fully explore the participants' experiences and perceptions of the Durham One Call program.

All interviews were tape recorded and reviewed in compiling notes for this report. The authors wish to thank all the study participants for taking the time to discuss the Durham One Call system. Their contributions to the study were invaluable.

Angela Andrews, Water Management
Michael Balzarano, Public Works
Robin Bibby, Budget
Terri Birth, Public Works
Tom Bonfield, City Manager
Julie Brenman, Strategic Initiatives
Matthew Brinkley, Budget
David Cates, Public Works
Diane Catotti, City Council
Gray Dawson, Neighborhood Improvement Services
Terri Ettson, Durham One Call
Bennie Fields, Neighborhood Improvement Services
Antonio Hardeman, Budget
James Hardesty, Public Works
Daryl Hedgspeth, Neighborhood Improvement
   Services

Katie Kalb, Public Works
Curtis Kenney, Public Works
Nancy Kost, Solid Waste
Donald Long, Solid Waste
Wanda Page, Deputy City Manager
Jay Reinstein, Strategic Initiatives
Lorisa Seibel, Resident
Cheryl Shifflet, Resident
Constance Stancil, Neighborhood Improvement
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Christina Tookes, Solid Waste
Ted Voorhees, Deputy City Manager
Karmisha Wallace, Assistant to the City Manager
Vickie Westbrook, Water Management
Robert Williams, Solid Waste
Rosa Williams, Water Management
Mike Woodard, City Council

## Endnotes

1 *Durham One Call...Does It All! FY 2006 Summary*. City of Durham, North Carolina, 2007.
2 "City of Durham Customer Service Bill of Rights." *A Guide to Durham Municipal Services.* City of Durham, North Carolina, 2005.
3 *Imagine Durham, Durham's Annual Results Based Accountability Report*. City of Durham, North Carolina, Fall 2007.

## ICMA National Study of 311 and Customer Service Technology

In 2006, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) received funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to conduct the first national study of centralized customer service systems for local governments, such as 311 call centers, constituent relationship management (CRM) systems, and online service request forms, among others. Working with The Ochs Center for Metropolitan Studies in phase two of the study, ICMA is conducting research and developing new resources and tools for communities considering implementation of 311/CRM systems.

Such systems generate a wealth of information that may be used for a variety of purposes including community engagement, performance measurement, and budgeting. Incorporating these types of data—for example, types and number of citizen requests; compliance with service level agreements, which define when a request will likely be completed; and service request resolution rates, which show how often departments are meeting their goals—into such processes can be challenging. As part of its national study, ICMA brought together a team of researchers and practitioners to research and document approaches communities are using to integrate these processes. This project will produce a series of three case studies dedicated to this issue. This report is the first in that series.

### For more information about the study, contact...

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